

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Playworks Education Energized

Application ID: 14AC156448

Program Name: Playworks Louisiana

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence to support the need to reduce and/or eliminate “moderate” to “serious” bullying in school through Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s statement and public awareness.

The applicant captured the need in the state by providing data that 32% of sixth graders were victims of bullying.

The applicant satisfactorily explained the desire to reduce bullying in high poverty elementary schools within Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish.

The applicant cited research demonstrating that bullying is statistically growing and how it impacts student-learning outcomes.

Applicant indicated a significant percentage of bullying in the state, and higher incidents of bullying in New Orleans and in the targeted region. Additionally, applicant cites growth in bullying in targeted region.

Applicant provided high-quality, evidence-based data from a number of research studies as well as studies from previous programs evidencing the probability of a very high likelihood of reaching targeted outcomes.

The applicant’s past performance demonstrates a strong level of financial and resource support.

The applicant has a national record of managing large, multifaced grants.

The applicant is a \$31 million organization with 17 years of experience.

The applicant has 17 years of success and will help over 170,000 youth this year.

The applicant has expanded their partnership to support 40,000 students in eight cities with AmeriCorps members.

Weaknesses:

Applicant references data from the American Medical Association and the U.S. Department of Justice to show the volume of bullying, but does not specify the names or dates of the reports referenced.

The applicant presents limited information linking targeted schools to low-income schools where 50% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The applicant's model is designed to help all students; however the applicant has applied their urgency to address students that may have additional barriers to learning first. For example, students in low-income schools where at least 50% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Limited research was provided to support that more cultural training to reduce bullying is needed in communities based on their income levels.

Applicant provided data supporting bullying and indicated that AmeriCorps members would serve the targeted region of Metropolitan Human Services District 1. Applicant later states that the program will target high poverty schools within Orleans and Jefferson Parishes. It is unclear what the connection between poverty rates are for identification of targeted schools. Applicant indicates that poverty schools have non-existent resources but did not provide any data to support this statement.

The applicant does not provide enough information to determine whether the initially mentioned Region 1 and the named Parishes are the same targeted regions.

The applicant states that it will target high poverty elementary schools without indicating what indicators would be used to identify the targeted schools. Applicant also states that it would add a second tier of low-income schools where at least 50% of the population had free and reduced lunch.

The applicant presents limited evidence on how the intervention at recess, the before school program or after school programs were going to be long lasting.

The applicant did not present clear evidence on how the AmeriCorps members will serve their respective areas with 1.5 Members at each site.

The applicant has demonstrated great success with AmeriCorps members and made great strides toward helping economically disadvantaged students.

In the key statistical data, the applicant did not document if the findings were from Louisiana Playworks or from another state Playworks program; however, teachers in Playworks schools reported significantly LESS BULLYING and exclusionary behavior, a 43% difference in average rating scores. The applicant also stated that at Playworks schools, the average rating of students' "FEELING OF SAFETY" at school was 20% higher than the average rating reported by teachers in control schools.